



## Pointers for Developing Zones for MPAs

- Management zoning is a *prescriptive* process that specifies **future conditions**. Unless existing conditions are the desired future, **the zoning should not describe existing conditions**. (Zoning the existing conditions, rather than the future conditions, will maintain the status quo, which usually will not help managers resolve current or future visitor use impacts.)
- Zoning should not be an arbitrary process or be based solely on planners' or park staff's opinions. There should be a philosophy or vision for the future that guides the zoning scheme. Without a unifying concept, zoning decisions cannot be explained or justified. The reasons for placing zones in different locations should be documented as part of the process.
- Management zones should have boundaries that are distinguishable in the field. Drainages, rivers, streams, topographic features, landforms, roads, and other identifiable features should be used as zone boundaries.
- There is no minimum area a zone can cover; however, in general, new zones for tiny portions of a park or for a single feature should not be created. When needed, specific management strategies for a small area in a larger zone should be identified.
- The shape of zones on a map may vary considerably depending on the resources, visitor experiences, and management strategies. Some zones may be narrow or linear, such as zones that follow vehicle corridors or rivers; other zones may be large polygons.
- When applying zones, the planning team should consider the land uses outside of the park. To the extent possible, the park zoning scheme should be compatible with land uses in areas adjacent to the park.